



# Counterinsurgency and Beyond: Operationalizing the Civilian Surge

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PHOTO: A Missouri Agri-business Development Team provides feral hog trapping instruction to local villagers in Kama District. Without proper trapping, a small group of feral hogs can grow into a large herd and rapidly destroy multiple villages' cropland and endanger small children. (Missouri National Guard)

**T**HE UNITED STATES has been less than effective in employing the instruments of national power in recent conflicts. While the military has been an unparalleled expeditionary warfighter, our diplomatic, information, economic, and governance efforts have failed to fulfill stability operations and reconstruction requirements. Ad hoc military organizations, national-level federal agencies, and contractors have tried to meet the demand, but they are not structured, resourced, or trained to fill the need.

Analysts have called for revolutionary changes in the way the United States conducts foreign engagements, but thus far, no practical models have emerged. Policymakers need to eschew established conventional thinking and determine commonly understood, easily articulated, and fundamentally supportable national security and economic strategies using civilian as well as military capabilities.

Not only must the United States win in Afghanistan, it must win there in a new way. We need skills found primarily at the state and local levels of government or in the private sector if we are to succeed in post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. Moreover, although we are in phase IV of Operation Enduring Freedom, we are in phase zero—shaping operations—everywhere else. The United States should institutionalize the idea of phase zero operations and build capacity to execute them in future foreign endeavors. Policymakers must abandon legacy mechanisms impeding progress and harness instruments of power across the whole of government, the whole of industry, the whole of information, and the whole of American resolve.

President Obama, in his role as the commander in chief, has emphasized that economic development and engagement are the tools we will use to defeat terrorism in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> We should use these tools more effectively by employing civilian experts with the skills needed to perform post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. These experts, such as civil engineers, city planners and managers, agronomists, business administrators, conservationists, and hospital administrators, exist at the state and local levels, not at the national level where policy and resourcing experts dwell.

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The United States needs to develop near- and long-term solutions to organize and employ those civilian resources. We should organize, train, deploy, and employ these experts to properly take advantage of the Nation's global engagement strategy. The National Guard is best suited to create this civilian capability.

## Benefits of Using the Guard

A civilian reserve force modeled like the National Guard will fill these critical needs, and tangible benefits will accrue from involving the American citizenry in national security strategy.

**Gain support of the people.** The American public is becoming disconnected from the effort and sacrifice associated with our current conflicts. As Active Component forces are increasingly concentrated on fewer installations in the United States, the National Guard and other Reserve Components offer most citizens their only connection with the Nation's defense establishment. Citizen Soldiers and Airmen have inextricable links in 3,300 communities, creating tangible, local connections between those communities and the national-level effort.

**Provide essential skill sets.** In addition to providing a vital connection to the American people, employing civilian skill sets brings critical capabilities needed for stability operations to the warfighting commander. The Obama administration's call for a civilian surge has significantly increased the number of U.S. civilian officials in Afghanistan; however, the much-touted civilian surge is not new.<sup>2</sup> This effort has been underway for decades, but it has recently gained prominence during overseas contingency operations in the form of the National Guard and Reserve Components. Reserve Component troops have always used their civilian skills to achieve military success during engagement activities, but this effort has been unorganized and often happenstance. Today's civil-mobilization efforts barely tap the

capacity of the National Guard, the citizen skills portion of the Citizen Soldier equation.

As an example, the United States does not have a national-level police force providing an expeditionary, sustainable, professional civilian law enforcement capability for use in a deployed environment. Similarly, it does not maintain a standing capability to conduct forward-deployed civilian law enforcement training. The French *gendarmerie* and the Italian *carabinieri* fulfill both those roles for their countries. The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program have these roles; still, neither organization is robust enough to meet the Nation's requirements. The U.S. military must rely on military police and security forces to fill this gap in stability and reconstruction missions. Because these Active Component forces tend to be young and inexperienced, National Guard and other Reserve Component forces with the requisite knowledge are a logical choice to assume this task.

There are approximately 20,000 state and local law enforcement jurisdictions in the United States. As it stands now, the only way to access the wealth of civilian law enforcement education and experience is to rely on the National Guard and other Reserve Component forces with a law enforcement background using ad hoc police transition teams or other temporary organizations.<sup>3</sup>

**Provide a permanent force structure.** Our Nation is employing the Reserve Components as a uniformed "civilian surge" capability in a manner that wastes expertise and erodes efficiency. To address today's challenges, the Department of Defense should discard the notion of applying temporary solutions ad hoc to a problem that generations of our citizens will face. The Nation requires a national security apparatus with permanent structures and established doctrine. A fixed solution mutually benefits federal, state, and local

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**The Missouri Agriculture and Department of Conservation Team meets with Lal Pur District Governor Sayed Rahman and local tribal elders to install several community solar powered irrigations wells.**

government and provides enormous residual benefit to the private and public sectors. The essential, much-sought capability needed to win overseas contingency operations—provisional reconstruction teams, police training teams, agribusiness development teams, U.S. Southern Command’s New Horizons operations, and the National Guard State Partnership Program—are all ad hoc formations. There is no formally recognized force structure. All draw from our fighting formations. All remain unsupported by the established doctrine, organization, training, leadership, materiel, personnel, and facilities process.

Provisional reconstruction teams are unquestionably centerpiece organizations in the current tactical, operational, and strategic efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Yet, six years into Operation Iraqi Freedom, provisional reconstruction teams still do not come together for rigorous, focused predeployment preparation and training. Mission requirements are often unclear or ill defined; sometimes individuals with little real-world development experience are assigned to these teams

relatively late in the process. Teams often do not develop synergy. In addition, they do not routinely conduct predeployment training with the military organizations (most often brigade combat teams or regimental combat teams) sharing their battlespace.<sup>4</sup> The people of Iraq and Afghanistan expect the United States to improve the post-conflict environment, but the ad hoc pick-up teams fail to deliver.<sup>5</sup>

The organization and employment of land-power formations (brigade and regimental combat teams and their subordinate battalion and company commands) stand in sharp contrast. Despite force structure changes driven by transformation and technological advances, the building-block formations of land power are comparatively fixed and enduring. The protocols for preparing these forces for deployment are time-tested and rigorous.

In addition to the need for warfighters, combatant commands require skilled civilians as engagement tools during phase zero operations. The National Guard’s State Partnership Program, which links U.S. states with foreign nations in support of U.S. security cooperation objectives, remains one of



the most efficient, enduring engagement tools, but again, it has no fixed force structure and minimal resourcing. Southern Command's long-running, highly successful New Horizons program to conduct humanitarian and civic assistance exercises also relies on task-organized forces to achieve its effects.

**Enhance the civil-military partnership.** Interagency partnership is the key to effectively employing a civilian surge capability, but most Active Component forces and Reserve Component forces not part of the National Guard do not routinely interact with numerous interagencies in a collaborative environment. On the other hand, the National Guard operates daily as an interagency partner under exactly those conditions.

Under the command and control of the governors, the Guard regularly participates in complex civil-military operations during domestic emergencies. It does not demand to lead those efforts. Rather, the Guard expands the capacity of the civilian instruments of government at the state and local level, bringing organized, equipped, and disciplined military capability to extend the reach of civilian authorities. This civil-military partnership has been a core capability of the National Guard since the Guard's inception.

In contrast, Active Component forces have little requirement to plan, coordinate, or conduct operations in conjunction with civilian leaders. In fact, they have limited authority to interact officially with state or local governments, even in emergency response. The Army and Air National Guard are the only components who conduct interagency operations with few constitutional or statutory restrictions. Most other forces routinely conduct interagency operations only in a foreign engagement, and then without the benefit of extensive preparation or any taming of cultural bias toward partnering with civilian agencies. However, the National Guard routinely coordinates and executes operations with interagency partners around the globe. For decades, even preceding the Partnership for Peace and State Partnership Programs, the National Guard and its interagency partners have executed multiple nation-building missions in South and Central America. In addition, National Guard leaders have organized and led Joint interagency task forces participating in the New Horizons program exercises. These task forces have provided combatant commands with civilian expertise to efficiently and effectively conduct humanitarian and civic assistance in underdeveloped nations.



Missouri Governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, center, visits the Nangarhar (Afghanistan) Province Director of Agriculture, Mr. Mohammad Hussain Safi, and the Soldiers and Airmen of the Missouri National Guard's second Agri-business Development Team at Forward Operating Base Finley-Shields in July 2009.

The U.S. inability to organize and employ the necessary civilian skill sets to support contingency operations has led to an overreliance on foreign or domestic contractors. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is not robust enough to provide the depth and breadth necessary to meet global demands. In many instances, USAID simply manages contracts instead of fielding government employees with the requisite skills. The considerable operational role currently assumed by contractors ignores the persistent nature of ongoing conflicts and amounts to institutionalizing a temporary solution to a near-permanent problem. There are inherent challenges with contractors concerning cost containment, compensation, treatment of workers, and basic humanitarian issues.<sup>6</sup> Overreliance on foreign or domestic contractors erodes the capacity of government, diminishes confidence in America's resolve, and disconnects the American people from U.S. strategic efforts.<sup>7</sup>

## **Proposed Civilian Reserve Corps**

A number of proposals have called for establishing a civilian reserve corps composed of experts in economic development, the rule of law, governance, agriculture, police training, and other critical areas necessary for stability and reconstruction. As a long-term program, these proposals are especially attractive because such a corps could offer tangible, personal connections between the American people and the persistent conflict and bring skills not found in the military to U.S. foreign endeavors.

Policymakers have proposed differing models for establishing a civilian reserve corps within the Department of State to organize and employ a civilian surge capability.<sup>8</sup> The Chief of the National Guard Bureau offers a more workable solution: a civil branch of the National Guard similar to the Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>9</sup> This structure perhaps could attract civilians from

across the government and private enterprise to a truly national "reserve" institution. The organization could be structured and trained along the lines of the Nation's most successful model for inter-agency application of power—the National Guard.

A civilian reserve corps modeled after and administered by the National Guard would reach out and embrace the civilian capabilities found in local- and state-level government across the Nation. This branch of the guard should encompass the land-grant universities and their extension services and partner with state and local associations such as the Farm Bureau and school board associations.

The National Guard is especially well suited to build a civilian reserve corps branch. Each of the 54 National Guard organizations has a U.S. property and fiscal office capable of accepting and disbursing federal funds. They also have existing structures that man, care for, organize, train, equip, and mobilize forces. Once we remove the artificial hindrances to deploying civilians, the National Guard will have the inherent, organic capability to prepare and process personnel for overseas deployment. Most important, the National Guard has inextricable, constitutionally based ties to state government. No other organization in the United States has these unique capabilities.

Numerous models are available to help design a civil branch of the National Guard. This branch, doubling as a Reserve Component of the Department of Defense, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security, could be trained, organized, and implemented to meet virtually any design parameters with few statutory changes.

**Train for unity of purpose.** The National Guard is the best organization to train a civilian corps. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command accredits all 54 National Guard regional training institutes. When compared to national-level, one-location schools, the National Guard educational institutions are better training options because they are located in every state or territory and have

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Missouri National Guard

Missouri Agri-business Development Team members recon a potential *karizc* (traditional Afghan technique to transport water at great distances for irrigation) in a rural portion of Rodat District.

the organic capability to provide quality control oversight to a variety of training courses. In addition, each National Guard has a premobilization training and assistance element that provides independent, third-party verification and certification of training. These formal training organizations already have the capability and capacity to meet the common core predeployment training needs of a National Guard civil branch.

**Provide reliable, robust capabilities.** An organized and trained civil branch of the National Guard creates a reliable, robust capability to conduct stability and reconstruction operations. The United States has a critical need for this capability so it can reorganize its approach to address the five common requirements for stabilization and reconstruction: the rule of law, a safe and secure environment for indigenous populations, a sustainable economy, a stable governance, and social well-being. Currently the military component focuses on security tasks almost to the exclusion of reconstruction tasks. This approach of “security first” becomes “security only” if commanders lack

the necessary tools to design, develop, complete, and maintain reconstruction tasks. The Nation’s approach to stability and reconstruction operations should provide a permanent base to solve persistent problems.

Much as the armed forces embraced counterinsurgency in 2007, both the armed forces and government agencies must fully embrace and implement stability and reconstruction, incorporating interagency civilians as full and equal partners throughout the military command structure. Many of the skill sets in highest demand—public works, city planning, judicial organization—do not reside comfortably in uniform. Military commanders can set the conditions for stability and reconstruction by focusing on security tasks, but skills found at state and local levels of government or in the private sector are what rebuild societies and make permanent peace.<sup>10</sup>

**Use technology and reach back.** In the current operational environment, bandwidth limitations, combatant command restrictions on civilian experts entering the theater, and countless other factors artificially constrain the Nation’s ability to



bring the correct skill to the right place and time to achieve the most decisive effect.

Returning to the example of agricultural development teams, we note that reach back (the capability to use video conferencing or other means to communicate) from Afghanistan to subject matter experts at land-grant universities or other organizations should be the cornerstone of the program. At this time, connectivity is unnecessarily difficult. We lose a significant opportunity when subject matter experts who are eager to volunteer their unique skills cannot deploy, while demand for their expertise goes unfilled.

Here again, the National Guard is well postured to connect deployed forces with the subject matter experts at home. The Guard has existing non-secure voice and data links in more than 3,000 communities in the United States. Moreover, the Guard routinely procures commercial off-the-shelf technology for disaster response that can easily be adapted to a civil branch of the National Guard.

## Near- and Long-Term Recommendations

Pending longer-term policy and statutory changes to implement some of the recommendations in this

article, the National Guard offers a near-term, robust solution to today's challenges of conducting stability and reconstruction operations. The capability exists to organize and implement a civilian surge. The National Guard's State Partnership Program offers a model for the civilian surge for Operation Enduring Freedom. While conventional forces pursue counterinsurgency operations, the National Guard should develop on-going, state-to-province partnerships.

The Missouri National Guard deployed the first agricultural team to Nangarhar in 2007. The fifth rotation of the Missouri teams will deploy in late spring of 2011. This type of long-term commitment builds trust and creates bonds critical to reconstruction efforts. State-to-province partnerships strengthen conditions for the whole-of-government approach. The Missouri National Guard teams connect Missouri's Department of Agriculture and Department of Conservation to Nangarhar's provincial Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. By expanding this concept to enduring state-to-province partnerships, connections can be made throughout government and the private sector.

At the same time, we should release the National Guard teams conducting these state-to-province partnerships from one-size-fits-all restrictions on U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan and in other

*The Missouri National Guard's second Agribusiness Development Team arrived in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, in November 2008. Transfer of authority took place on 15 December. Surprisingly, Nangarhar had over 100 fish farm facilities, which were located throughout the province. The facilities were in varying stages of disrepair, and the only fish hatchery was semi-functional. Team leaders initiated a project to revitalize and reinvigorate this key industry. The team had skilled project managers and plant and large animal specialists, but little expertise with fish hatcheries. However, the team had a strategic partner in the Missouri Department of Conservation. Using reach-back capability to Missouri and existing relationships, the team and the Department of Conservation completed initial fish hatchery development planning by early January 2009. Due to restrictions on civilian travel to Afghanistan, the Missouri Department of Conservation selected a subject matter expert with a Reserve Component affiliation to travel to Nangarhar to conduct on-the-ground assessment and planning. He mobilized for 60 days deployment and arrived at Forward Operating Base Finley-Shields in mid-February. A functional Kunar Fish Hatchery design was complete within 30 days, and the Department of Conservation's expert was back at his civilian job in Missouri by early April. This vignette demonstrates that an effective method to employ the instruments of national power at the state and local level is to use civilian experts deployed through the National Guard.*



***Long-term relationships at the basic execution levels of government speed stabilization and development.***

locations outside the United States. Within the constraints of the security situation, these teams should be flexible enough to adapt to the local cultural environment. We should permit the teams to conform to cultural norms in, for instance, dress and grooming. The special operations framework may be a favorable standard. States should have the flexibility to rotate members of these teams incrementally to avoid the “everyone-in, everyone-out” rotation of conventional forces because continuity considerations and longevity of operations are critical for success.

**Engagement teams.** The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs has considered a proposal to build military engagement teams of approximately 480 Soldiers.<sup>11</sup> However, a fixed force structure approach creates an inflexible organization. Instead, engagement teams should be configured to accommodate the unique needs of each province. These teams should also include civilian subject matter experts, as appropriate. The current National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Table of Distribution and Allowances has a paragraph of positions originally designed to facilitate the staffing of embedded training teams. This fixed, yet flexible approach is the correct way to build such teams.

This proposal mirrors the current procedures used in conducting engagements under the State Partnership Program. Long-term relationships at the basic execution levels of government speed stabilization and development. State-to-province, city-to-city, town-to-town, and village-to-village relationships shaped according to similarities and common understandings are key. This program mirrors the highly successful “sister city” program. Central Command, in conjunction with the National Guard Bureau, could solicit similar relationships for all provinces and then resource associated activities appropriately. This bottom-up strategy will be more successful than the top-down strategy of the past.

## **Conclusion**

The United States does not effectively bring all the instruments of national power to bear in its global engagements. Currently, ad hoc military organizations and national-level federal department representatives or contractors attempt to deliver the on-the-ground expertise necessary to conduct stability operations in regions of conflict. The United States needs to prioritize resources and build a civilian engagement capacity. The combatant commands could use this capability to conduct exercises that achieve theater engagement goals. Exercising this capability in regions of interest is a smart, powerful, proven, cost-effective, and efficient method to achieve engagement requirements.

Many areas marked by marginal or fragile governance, yet with more permissive security environments than Iraq or Afghanistan, should be engaged through training exercises supporting theater security cooperation programs directed by combatant commanders. Southern Command’s New Horizons exercise model is adaptable to civilian skill sets and expandable to other regions of the world. Africa Command and Pacific Command both have extensive engagement requirements that military forces alone cannot fulfill. The lure of overseas peacetime deployment retains military members and will have the same effect on civilian members of the civilian branch of the National Guard.

The proposal outlined in this article is affordable and effective. The National Guard is the best organization to create this civilian capability. In the long term, a National Guard civilian corps is the optimal solution to a number of problems, including Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) dwell-time issues. In the near term, creating a partnership program and expanding available tools to employ citizen Soldiers and civilians will meet the demands of a new dynamic American foreign policy strategy for counterinsurgency and beyond. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 December 2009. President Barack Obama's statement included, "We'll support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas—such as agriculture—that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people."

2. Karen DeYoung, "Civilians to Joint Afghan Buildup," *The Washington Post*, 18 March 2009.

3. For a detailed discussion of the civilian law enforcement training capability gap in the U.S. military, see Seth Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009), 119-21.

4. An in-depth discussion of current manning and training shortcomings is in Jesse Pruet's "The Interagency Future: Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne," *Military Review* (September-October 2009), 54-63.

5. General Stanley McChrystal, Special Address to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1 October 2009, 4. His comments included the following: "Along with the arrival of coalition forces, they (the Afghan people) expected a positive change. They saw that initially and then waited for other changes—economic development and improvements in governance—that, in many cases . . . were unmet."

6. See the ongoing work of the Senate Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight led by Chairman Claire McCaskill and ranking member Bob Bennett.

7. James A. Baker, III, and Lee H. Hamilton, *Iraq Study Group Report*, 100. The Iraq Study Group Report statement included, "The State Department should train personnel to carry out civilian tasks associated with a complete stability operation outside the traditional embassy setting. It should establish a Foreign Service Reserve Corps with personnel and expertise to provide surge capacity for such an operation. Other key civilian agencies, including Treasury, Justice, and Agriculture, need to create similar technical assistance capabilities."

8. Information Memorandum, Chief, National Guard Bureau, subject: The Role of the National Guard in "A Balanced Strategy"

9. Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri emphasizes the primacy of civilian, not military, leadership in writing, "The strategy . . . to be successful . . . must emphasize economic opportunities and assistance in local projects that local people believe are high priorities. This effort is to be supported by military operations, not the other way around." Christopher S. Bond and Lewis M. Simmons, *The New Front: Southeast Asia and the Road to Global Peace with Islam* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2009), 259.

10. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) draft working paper briefing, "Applying Sustainable Forces to a Persistent Challenge."

11. Barbara K. Bodine, essay, "Preemptive Post-Conflict Stabilization and Reconstruction" (Commanding Heights: Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations) National Defense University, 2009, 37.

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